

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.
20546

Office of the Administrator

Honorable William Clark
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20506

August 18, 1983

Dear Bill:

In response to the NSC request for written agency positions on the Space Station issue, I would like to reiterate the points that I made at the August 10 SIG(Space) meeting on that subject.

NASA believes that the Administration should commit now to the development of a permanently manned civil Space Station. Commercial and scientific needs -- and, perhaps more importantly, commercial and scientific potential -- warrant this undertaking. A permanently manned Space Station is the preferred vehicle for conducting the vast majority of existing and projected civil space missions for the rest of the century. Because a Space Station is justified on the basis of civil needs, NASA believes that the program should be funded out of the nation's civil space budget.

After several years of uncertainty in the last Administration, this Administration's National Space Policy goal of expanding US private sector investment and involvement in space has generated a substantial momentum. During an August 3 presentation to the President, industry representatives were emphatic about their support for a Space Station because of its commercialization potential. The private sector told the President that it now needs stability in the civil space program and a national commitment to a Space Station if real capital is to be put at risk. Moreover, this is just the beginning. A Space Station will provide us the opportunity to learn through experience and to uncover new ways to exploit and explore space.

Despite the current absence of national security requirements for a Space Station, NASA is confident that a civil Space Station will serve as a valuable national resource. The Space Station will enable the national security

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community to do research, to learn about military man's role in space, and to explore the potential military uses of a permanently manned space facility. In the future, the modular design of the Space Station will permit the accommodation of military requirements, when and if they arise.

US space leadership is being actively challenged by the Soviets. What the Soviets have already learned during their Salyut program has led them to commit to developing a permanently manned space station. A visible, highly publicized, continuously manned Soviet space station will receive frequent worldwide attention and will enhance Soviet prestige. Abdicating to the Soviets in this area, without providing a counterbalancing U.S. presence, is politically unacceptable. An immediate commitment to a US Space Station is essential to counter the Soviet challenge to our space leadership and also to put us in a position to learn as much about man's permanent role in space as they are learning.

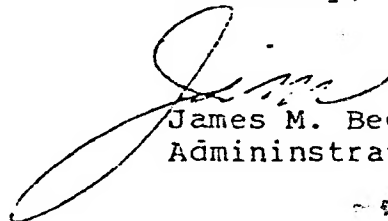
Foreign participation in this highly visible program will give our allies the opportunity to continue to share in the benefits of our civil space program. Self-generated international interest in a US Space Station has led Europe, Canada and Japan to earmark close to \$5 million of their own funds for independent planning studies. These countries will be spending significant resources on space in the future. In fact, they are now approaching major decision points in their own space programs for the next decade. In each case, collaboration on Space Station is juxtaposed against the undertaking of large, competitive national programs. Delay in our proceeding with a Space Station could have the effect of precluding significant international investment in our programs, and of diverting foreign resources into competing efforts. Following NASA's long and successful experience with international collaboration in high technology programs, international collaboration on the Space Station can be conducted so as to minimize risks of unwarranted technology transfer.

NASA is convinced that a Space Station is necessary to maintain real and perceived US leadership in space and also to satisfy many of the other goals and objectives of the National Space Policy. Thus NASA believes that the US should undertake a Space Station program at any NASA budget level. However, to conduct the Space Station program effectively and to utilize it to its fullest, the level and pace of total NASA funding should be sufficient to maintain focused and vigorous efforts in all areas of the civil space program. Furthermore, a civil Space Station program should not adversely affect current and projected space programs and overall priorities in the national security area.

NASA shares the interest of the national security community in maintaining a strong Shuttle program. The Shuttle is the key to routine access to space for both civil and national security missions. Making the Shuttle fully operational and cost-effective will remain NASA's highest priority. NASA is committed to achieving the full capabilities required of the nation's Space Transportation System.

In conclusion, I would like to add a personal note. When the President joined me in California on July 4, 1982, for the landing of the Columbia, he said that "we must look aggressively to the future by demonstrating the potential of the Shuttle and establishing a more permanent presence in space." NASA is ready to respond. Further study of this issue is not required. The nation has been in space for 25 years and it is this President's opportunity to take the next major step forward.

Sincerely,



James M. Beggs
Admininstrator